



Safety & Trail Etiquette

Safety for all users on West Lafayette's shared use trails is of utmost importance. Please remember, the trails are a shared public space – safety and courtesy make for a positive trail experience for everyone. Please respect your fellow trail users.

Safety Tips:

- Stop, look and listen for motor traffic before proceeding across the road! There are locations where the trail crosses streets with motor traffic. These intersections are usually marked with stop signs for trail traffic, but the crossing motor traffic does not have to stop.
- Pass others on the left. Just as it is on the road, faster trail users should pass slower trail users on the left. Give an audible warning with a bell, or call out, "Passing on your left!"
- Pets on the trail should be under control at all times. Please remove your pet's wastes.

- Do not litter along the trails. Leave only footprints (or tire tracks); take only pictures.
- There are no helmet laws for cyclists on the trails, but here is a [helmet fitting guide](#) for reference.
- Be prepared to [change a bike tire](#).

Speed Guide:

It is the nature of these trails that users are moving at different speeds. Parents with children and folks with pets are moving slowly. Nature photographers are practically motionless. 'Bladers' and 'Bicyclists' are moving fast and faster. With a mix of speeds, there's a need to understand where you fit in, and whom to yield to when out on the trails. The short rule is:

Wheels Yield to Heels

Here's a guide by user types, from slowest to fastest:

Trail Use for Parents with Small Children

- Keep an eye on children on the path. Be mindful that kids (on foot or bike) sometimes veer into the path of oncoming traffic, especially cyclists who may not be able to slow down.
- If your child is cycling, be sure they are skilled enough to control the bike, and maneuver as needed to share the trail and safely pass.
- Teach children they must share the trail.

Disabled Trail Users

- Nearly all portions of the trails are accessible. Disabled users could be in a wheelchair, or a "racing chair". Both are about twice as wide as a bicycle and neither are as maneuverable as a bicycle.

- A disabled trail user may not have an obvious handicap. They may have hearing or vision problems. Some may have a problem with their balance.
- An in-line skater overtaking a handicapped person should shorten their stride, so the handicapped trail user can change direction or steer away, or around the blade-user.

Trail Use for Walkers

- Walkers are almost the slowest trail user. All of the others are faster and will be coming from behind to pass.
- Walk on the right side of the trail, slowest traffic keep right; pass on left.
- At busy areas on the trail, avoid walking three abreast. Two people walking side by side fills up a lot of trail. When faster traffic comes up from behind switch from walking abreast to in-line to give them room to go by you safely.
- Pay attention to the traffic. Look and listen for oncoming, overtaking and cross traffic.
- Be sure pets are under control at all times.

Trail Use for Runners

- Runners are faster than the walkers but not as fast as the skaters.
- When approaching slower traffic move to the left side of the trail (pass on left only) and say loudly before you get to the walkers: "On Your Left." This will give them time to clear the way.

Trail Use for In-Line Skaters

- Skaters are much faster than walkers and runners
- When approaching slower traffic move to the left side of the trail (pass on left only) and say loudly: "On Your Left." This will give them time to clear the way. Special Note: Watch for cracks and tree roots that make the trail less than safe. Check to see if the trail is rough in advance.

Trail Use for Bicyclists

- Bikes are the fastest traffic on the trail. Very fast riding is inappropriate for the trails and should be done on public roadways.
- Warn slower moving traffic that you are passing. Sound your bell or say loudly before you get to the other traffic “On Your Left.” The speeds of a bike make it possible to startle other trail users, so don’t wait to give your warning until you are right next to the walker or runner. Do give enough time.